New Propaganda

Otherness: The bandwagon technique of marketing says, “Everybody is doing it, and so should you.” Otherness is just the opposite. It says “*Not* everybody is doing this, but you are special, so you should.”

Mass marking to a subculture: A subculture is a smaller group of people within the main culture—golfers, Nascar buffs, science fiction readers, retirees, etc. In the past, advertising focused on what was supposedly the average American. Now, more and more marketing targets various subcultures. Interestingly, mass marketing to a subculture can actually help make that subculture more mainstream!

Collective Memories: Collective memories are memories shared by large numbers of people, because of a common experience. For example, the tragedy of 9/11 is a memory that most Americans, unfortunately, share. Because shared memories can be so powerful, marketers’ campaigns often refer to them in their ads. The intent is to stir our emotions and sometimes our fears.

Humanizing Technology: Old advertising techniques used “scientific” mumbo jumbo to convince consumers that their products were cutting edge. Today, advertisers often try to humanize or simplify their products, especially if they are technological in nature. Humanizing technology is effective partly because it appeals to people’s needs and desires. It also works because consumers have grown suspicious of advertising that uses words they don’t understand.

Strong Woman: Advertising has always used beautiful women to sell everything from lipstick to Jell-O to motorcycles. In the past, ads usually portrayed women as gentle and weak and in need of help. Today, however, images of beautiful women are often strong and more athletic, representing both beauty *and* power. The athletic image of a woman is advertising today often suggest, “With this product, I am beautiful, strong, determined, and in charge of my life.”